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But in the Greek camp there is also a wrong which cannot be allowed to live. It is the wrong done by the Leader to Achilles. Troy cannot be taken till that violation be gotten rid of. Zeus is now disciplining the Greeks, his own people, to that end. But in Troy there is a greater wrong which they are called to put down; still they must set their own house in order before they can march to victory. This house-cleaning process is what Zeus has in hand just now; his method is to purify the Greeks through defeat. We see that the Greek divine principle will not be reconciled with Troy; war must be renewed by the weary human combatants; wherewith we have reached the next Book. The Gods must come forward again; in the Sixth Book there was not one divine interference; though much besought, they did not appear, they are not to be conciliated.

SHAKESPEARE'S "SONNETS."

BY GERTRUDE GARRIGUES.

"Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" There are not many of us who, if told in a way we could not question, that God had provided us a work to do for him would hesitate, for a moment, to undertake it. We would never think whether it was high or low, small or great. The direct command of God, the knowledge that it emanated from him, that it was intended for us and us alone, would sanctify and glorify it to us and to all beholders how mean soever it might otherwise appear. And yet, how we despise our daily tasks!

The here and now is our world, "the task that lies nearest our hand," is the work that God has chosen for us, and it is only by doing it, and doing it well, devoting to it all the resources of our being, that we can hope to be great or good or blest—to enjoy satisfaction ourselves or participate in the satisfaction of others. There is, there must be some one thing, at least, which each of us can do well; but, unhappily, it is seldom the thing we desire to do, and the conflict, the result of which we like to call the "choice"

of a vocation, but which is really the gradual recognition and final acceptance, by each individual, of his own limitations, grows out of this fact.

The thing we desire to do is our ideal, and we adorn it with every grace and credit it with every possibility. The thing we must do we hate and decry. It is the dark and ugly real from which we are constantly endeavoring to escape until, in some luminous hour of life, we discover that we have been fighting a shadow, that the antitheses have been reconciled, that it is only through the real that the ideal can become actual.

The solution of this problem is a necessary phase in the life of every being who rises above the plane of sense-certitude, and the manner of its solution will index what his future development is to be. So long as he elects to regard what keeps him from the realization of his ideal as a necessity or fate outside of himself, so long his soul will be filled with discord, disharmony, and unrest; but once he gains a glimpse of the truth, once he recognizes that his limitations lie within himself, he is on the road to peace. He may sink for a moment beneath his sense of nothingness, but it will be only for a moment. All true humility is an invitation to Grace. And Grace, the universal Good, flowing into the soul, raises it above all petty, sordid thoughts of self, at the same time that it unites it with the common brotherhood of humanity. It takes man out of his small personal self that it may ingratiate him into that larger self through which alone the ideal is attainable.

We know almost nothing of the private life of Shakespeare. No author was ever more impersonal. Dante and Goethe have left a mass of prose writing, by means of which we are able to interpret their poetic symbolism; but Shakespeare, who lived between the two and nearer Goethe, has left scarcely more by which we can judge the man himself than did old Homer. The dedications to his two poems and the "Sonnets" are all.

There are many opinions in regard to the "Sonnets," but their critics, nevertheless, naturally divide themselves into two classes—those who believe them to be autobiographical and those who believe them to be dramatic, vicarious. With the ordinary sense in which they are considered to be autobiographical we have nothing to do. Indeed, we consider it inadmissible, and a gratuitous

insult to the memory of a man the whole course of whose life, so far as we know it, was bound up in duty and high thoughts.

The glory of Shakespeare, the crowning quality which distinguishes his genius, which separates him immeasurably from his contemporaries, is the estimate which he placed upon woman. No glance, before or since, has ever sunk so deep into the soul of womanhood. He was the first, we had almost said the last, to discern that it is through her will that woman is strong. Others place what strength they allow her in her affections. In her affections, on the side of sensibility, she is weak, weak and unstable as water. On the intellectual side she may or may not be strong, but will is her province. This is true, even as regards the immediate phase of will. No one will deny her caprice, or the power of satisfying that caprice; but it is in the mediated stages, in the reflected forms of will, on her moral side, that woman is great.

Shakespeare saw this and said it, again and again, through all his noble gallery of woman characters. All poetry must be experience first. To portray them as he did, Shakespeare must have known good women. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" That matchless hand that could paint an Imogen, a Portia—either Italian or Roman—or even a simple Hero:

"Is my lord ill that hé doth speak so wide?"

that man a slave of the senses? Perish the thought!

We believe the "Sonnets" to have been autobiographical, however, though in a different sense. They were written, as were Michael Angelo's, to give expression to the feelings for which these solitary beings—solitary in their greatness—could find no confidant. We believe we can trace in these the soul life of our great poet—the early enthusiastic desire for a contemplative life; the strong impelling force, which lay within himself, and drove him into activity; the vain struggle and suffering; the renunciation and reconciliation:

"O, benefit of ill! now I find true,
That better is by evil still made better;
And ruined love when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater,

So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.”¹

The Renaissance reached England late. In Italy it had attained its zenith and was already beginning to decline, when its first influence began to be felt in the northern country. As an art period its best results in Italy were plastic, its full literary fruition was only reached in England. Various causes led to this result. Plastic art is largely the handmaid of religion, literature chronicles the whole life of humanity. Art disappeared before the middle ages to reappear centuries afterward under vastly different circumstances. It disappeared as the attendant of a religion in which the universal and individual—nature and spirit—combined, without losing their respective rights, and had for its principle the perfect identification of idea and form—of spiritual individuality—with material form. It reappeared in the service of a doctrine which was supposed to hold that the soul or spirit, although it appears in the external, should at the same time show itself to be returned back, out of this material state, into itself.

In plastic art Italy assimilated the classic models and gave them a new character—a new form indeed, painting instead of sculpture. The literary revival in Italy was pedantic, and foreign to the new spirit. It was a copy, more or less, of the Classic models, and so lacked genuine interest. The form though was good, and when it reached England, as it did in company with the antique models, translated into English and liberally diffused by the printing-press, it found its best issue in the influence it exerted there.

England had only just passed through her epic period, the War of the Roses had been successfully terminated, and the Tudors firmly established upon the throne, when the Reformation reached her. It first communicated itself to the throne, and from that descended to the people. It was accomplished, therefore, without any considerable violence or disorder.

In 1564 the long peace, which characterized the early part of the reign of Elizabeth and which was only terminated by the splendid episode of the Armada, had begun. It was an age of great mental excitement. The translation and general dissemination of the Bible and the freedom with which religion was discussed

¹ CXIX “Sonnet,” 9-14

gave a new impetus to thought. The secularization of the monasteries typified the secularization of the intellect of the period. The Church was not denied, it was simply disregarded. The invention of gunpowder, of the printing-press, and of the mariner's compass—which made the navigation of the ocean, the discovery and exploration of distant continents, as well as the closer intercourse of adjacent peoples practicable—all tended to foster that spirit of independent personality which is the leading characteristic of the north. The minds of men were fully and fairly awake; they saw and felt much, and believed in all they felt and saw. The possibilities of the individual was the one absorbing theme. And it was into this magnificently affirmative age that the great secular poet of all time, that "unutterable Shakespeare," was born.

Shakespeare was an Englishman to the core. English in his feeling of nationality, in his love of home, in his belief in the sanctity of the family, the integrity of the state, the limit of individual freedom—to the point that it does not conflict with society. English in his appreciation of the northern virtue, chastity, and in his recognition of woman. Given all these properties in their highest degree, and we have the character which appears to us under the name of the man Shakespeare. All of his contemporaries, who have spoken of him at all, bear witness to his moral worth, his generosity and warmth of heart, his manly and graceful demeanor, his "respectability" among a class that were at that time notably lax and disreputable—authors and actors.

He was known as the "gentle Shakespeare," which meant, not merely that he was mild-mannered, but, in Dante's sense, that he was possessed of all true and noble dignity. Although necessarily an associate of the wildest and most profligate spirits of his time, he was not a victim to their perverted morals. Their "wit-combats" and social pyrotechnics amused, and possibly instructed him, and for these he frequented their assemblies, though he was a stranger to their dissipations. He was in their world but not of it, and the effort made by some critics to prove the contrary is useless. We have had enough of the statement that it is necessary for a man to experience all vileness before he is able to picture all good. Man may be great in spite of evil, never because of it.

The taste for dramatic representation belongs to man by right of his imitative faculty. The drama is a symbol to him. He en-

joys seeing in it the reflection of his own thoughts and acts without being obliged to suffer from their consequences. He is content, in the drama, to learn through the experience of others. In England during the Elizabethan age the stage was a passion. The first importations of the Classic drama, or rather its feeble imitations, were soon outgrown. The Classic ideal, with its system of gods, all liable, like its purely human characters, to a fate outside of themselves, could find but little sympathy among a people where the apotheosis of the individual was the leading thought. In the Classic drama, too, the form is all in all, and only that content which is capable of a certain treatment can be seized upon and produced; in Romantic art, on the contrary, all things have their place. The essential element for representation is the subjective internality of the soul, and this internality is able to present itself under all conditions and to adapt itself to every circumstance.

When Shakespeare came to London, about 1586, he found his audience and the subject-matter of his plays awaiting him. The old chronicler Aubrey, says of him: "This William, being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, and was an actor at one of the play-houses, and did act exceeding well." And this is probably the whole truth, despite the many apocryphal stories told to explain his advent there.

The path to the stage was not a difficult one for Shakespeare. James and Richard Burbage, the latter the principal actor of his time and the original impersonator of many of Shakespeare's greatest tragic *rôles*, were from the same county as he; and Thomas Greene, another member of the company and its leading comedian, was from the same town. James Burbage, the father of Richard, was at the head of the company at the "Blackfriars," the theatre at which Shakespeare first engaged, and in which he soon, if not at once, became a stockholder. The term dramatist at that time included both author (dramatic) and actor, and that Shakespeare was both, almost from the first, is likely.

Shakespeare's youth was spent in one of the most picturesque parts of picturesque England, in a locality beside of intense historical interest—Warwick Castle was in his own county, and Bosworth Field only thirty miles away. His home was sufficiently far from the turmoil of great cities to make it possible for its in-

habitants to live the life of English yeomen. In this atmosphere of natural beauty, of historical association, and simple rustic manners, Shakespeare's character was shaped and moulded during this, his sense-period, to the noble proportions that made his future possible.

The drama was to that time what the newspaper is to ours. As the newspaper carries to remotest villages an echo of what is happening in the great centres of thought and deed, so the strolling-players carried to Stratford the first glimpse of that intellectual life which lured our poet to London. Once there, we can imagine how eagerly and swiftly he absorbed the material at his hand. It is necessary to remember always that Shakespeare was, first of all, a poet; a great intellectual, musical being, who, because he wrote in a time when deeds were to be noted, was obliged to use that form of poetry which best delineates action—the dramatic; but his genius was none the less lyric.

It is tolerably well proved that the *Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, the first part of *King Henry the Sixth*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Love's Labor Lost*, were all written by 1592. To have made such an immense stride in so short a time, considering that he was also an actor, Shakespeare must have been absorbingly occupied. Yet no one, who knows his works, can doubt that he was also a voluminous reader. The first part of Spenser's *Faerie Queen* was published in 1590. Can we doubt that Shakespeare was one of its earliest admirers, or that his soul was fired to emulation?

That plays at that time were not considered literature is well known, and the utter disregard which Shakespeare showed to his dramatic works, and which, among critics, has been a subject of general surprise, is easily explained upon this ground. It also explains how he, having discovered his ability to write, and feeling within himself the boundless invention, the unrivalled power of expression which are his characteristics, should pant for the opportunity to give them, what seemed to him, the only adequate form. Besides, to a man of his character, his native and acquired refinement, his pure morality, the companionship and the position in society that the stage forced upon him was in the highest degree repugnant; while the social position, acquired at a price, which to us, looking at it from a distance, seems so inordinate,

that Spenser reached, through his success as poet, may have seemed to him, at that time, an object of worthiest ambition.¹

The "Sonnets" were first published in 1609, but we know that some of them were in private circulation as early as 1598² and a few found their way into a piratical work, "The Passionate Pilgrim" in 1599. They bear internal evidence of having been written at widely different times and under vastly different circumstances. When they were published they appeared with a dedication, unique in its kind: "To the onlie begetter of these insuing Sonnets, *Mr. W. H.*, all happinesse and that eternitie promised by our ever-living poet, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth. *T. T.*" (Thomas Thorpe).

This dedication has been the despair of critics. It is not worth while even to mention the various theories regarding it. They all turn upon the definition of "begetter." Herr Barnstorff³ has had an immense amount of ridicule wasted upon him for venturing to suggest that "Mr. W. H." might mean "Mr. William Himself"; but, if we are to take begetter as meaning *producer*, there is no further question. Though there are few of the dramas over which the battle as to their genuineness has not been fought, and though there are those who would rob Shakespeare of all property whatever in the plays, no shadow of doubt has ever been cast upon the authorship of the "Sonnets." The dedication is by the bookseller, undoubtedly, but it would have been quite in Shakespeare's punning vein to have mystified that worthy by the enigmatical "Mr. W. H.," especially if the "Sonnets" conveyed, as we think, a more or less personal narrative.

If begetter is defined *procurer*, it will be seen that there is no end to which conjecture may not reach, and it is entirely immaterial to us now who procured them. We have them, and they are Shakespeare's.

Whatever may be said about the arrangement of the second series (CXXVII-CLIV), the first shows unmistakable evidence of design. They are consecutive in thought, if not in time, and represent a

¹ For his repugnance to the stage and his feeling of social degradation from being connected with it, see "Sonnets" CX and CXI.

² Francis Meres, in his "Palladis Tamia," speaks of Shakespeare's "sugard sonnets among his private friends."

³ "Schlüssel zu Shakspeare's Sonetten." Bremen, 1860.

totality; are, in short, in themselves a work of art. The second series are, no doubt, a collection—not a sequence—many of them written at the same time and under the same circumstances, if not exactly in the same spirit, as those of the first series, but rejected from it in the final arrangement. Some were, no doubt, occasional poems, introduced here by the poet because this was a complete edition of his sonnets—for we do not entertain the absurdity that the author, who was still a resident of London and actively interested in all literary affairs, was ignorant of their publication.

The first series (I–CXXVII) then is the real subject of our study, and we shall merely use the sonnets of the second part as aids to an interpretation.

In 1592 England was sorely visited by the plague. The theatres were closed, and all performances interdicted. Shakespeare was now, probably, for the first time since his removal to London, at leisure. In the following year the "*Venus and Adonis*" appeared, and its author in his dedication of it to his patron, the Earl of Southampton, calls it the "*first heir of his invention*"—which can mean nothing else but *his first literary work*. We have already seen that he did not consider his dramas such.

That the first seventeen sonnets contain a seemingly parallel motive to the one in this poem has been observed by many critics, and they have drawn from it the conclusion that they were written about the same time and were an offshoot from the poem. We venture the theory that they were written immediately before, and suggested the poem. Daniel's "*Sonnets to Delia*," traces of which we discover in Shakespeare's (that incomparable borrower's) earlier sonnets, was published early in 1592. They probably suggested the form for the poetical work which we are supposing Shakespeare, at his first moment of leisure, hastening to attempt.

The sonnet was an exotic in England, and, though some of her poets have breathed rich and glowing thoughts into its narrow compass, their passion is too often only a "painted fire." Shakespeare knew this right well, and in his contempt for "mistress-sonnetting" chose a male object for his muse. He thus threw a stumbling-block of huge proportion in the pathway of interpretation. The discussion as to what manner of *man* was the object of Shakespeare's passion has been conducted *ad nauseam*. We

hope to prove that the divinity that Shakespeare worshipped, the "master-mistress" of his passion was none other than his ideal of art—with him, poetry; and that the first seventeen sonnets are an invocation to that ideal to give itself form, to make of itself an actuality—in other words, to write, through him, a poem that should live. The same thought is repeated through all their exquisite, musical forms, and might express itself in the words of Carlyle: "Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifulest, infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name."

Take the first sonnet: "From fairest creatures"—highest ideals—"we desire increase"—a product, some expression of themselves. "That thereby beauty's rose"—truth—"might never die." "But as the riper should by time decrease, his tender heir might bear his memory"—old truths become obsolete and require new statement. "But thou"—Shakespeare's poetic ideal—"contracted to thine own bright eyes"—lost in reverie, self-contemplation—"feeds't thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel"—is only of service to itself. And, on to the last two lines, which contain the invocation:

"Pity the world, or else this glutton be
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee."

With the eighteenth sonnet, this motive is dropped, and is not again recurred to, and it is at this point that we suppose Shakespeare to have relinquished any intention he may have cherished to use the sonnet as a vehicle to fame. His sonnets, after this, are self-communings, and form a diary of that portion of his life during which they were written.

In his dramas, Shakespeare has given us his convictions upon all the great ethical questions. He has represented human life in its totality, not to justify or to condemn, but, like Nature herself, he offers to all men the contemplation of a universal destiny whose standpoint is necessity—the necessity which imposes upon the individual the result of his own deed, and which is therefore the highest freedom. But this view of life is not an inspiration, it must be learned, lived, and understood, before it can be taught.

All his greatest dramas represent the collisions of individuals with institutions, and their consequent discomforture. But where and how did the poor player gain this insight? How did he

learn that the individual in himself is powerless? That it is only through the universal, in combination with his fellows, that he can find validity? By experience? He lived it, and the "Sonnets" chronicle the process. They portray his collision with himself. In the dramas he is not known, but in the sonnets it is himself alone that is known.

In the eighteenth sonnet, as we have said, the content is changed. There is a ring of exultation here. Something has been produced:

"So long as men can breathe and eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee."

He has written the "Venus and Adonis," we will suppose, and carried it to London. The next seven sonnets are full of satisfied desire and growing confidence, which culminate in the twenty-fifth:

"Let those who are in favor with their stars,
Of public honor and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlooked for joy in that I honor most.
Great princes' favorites their fair leaves spread,
But as the marigold at the sun's eye;
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior, famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foiled,
Is from the book of honor razèd quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled.
Then happy I, that love and am beloved,
Where I may not remove or be removed."

The twenty-sixth has frequently been called a poetic version of the dedication to "Lucrece," and was probably addressed to his Muse as the prose one was to his friend and patron, Southampton. After this the whole tone alters. The happy confidence is gone, and from the twenty-seventh to the ninety-seventh there is a gradual culmination of bitterness, when again the tone changes, and the last thirty sonnets glow with reconciliation.

These three divisions, which bear some correspondence to the three periods to which critics assign his plays, could not be more distinctly marked. The second and third divisions are spoken of

by critics generally as the "first and second absence." We accept the name although we refuse the deduction of a material absence from a material object, and interpret instead that press of practical business forced Shakespeare to absent himself from his favorite pursuit—the production of semi-classic poems.

In December of 1593, the theatres in London were reopened after the plague. The "Venus and Adonis" had been published almost a year before (April, 1593), and "Lucrece" appeared a few months after (May, 1594). Both of these poems, especially the former, were immensely popular from the start, and, during the poet's life, were considered superior to his plays. The theatre was his means of livelihood, however, and his plain duty, the proper support of his family, Shakespeare never shirked.

At the reopening of the "Blackfriars," he found himself again engaged. Shortly after he became also a sharer in the "Globe," and thus called upon to do double duty. Robert Greene, the dramatist, in his "Groat's Worth of Wit," published 1592, calls Shakespeare, even then, a "Johannes Factotum," and we may easily believe that his ready tact, his fertile invention, his quick discernment, and unerring judgment, would make him the helpful man of every company and every occasion.

This strong practical bias, united to a theoretical comprehension almost unrivalled, marks him the inimitable man as well as poet. A man of thought, he was born for action, and these two sides warred within him until he discovered the deep identity underlying their difference. Before he came to London, he had lived a simple, sensuous life; the vigor, the warmth and glow of the intellectual excitement which he found there dazzled and overcame him, and, for a time, he lived in the intellect alone. But intellect, unless reënforced by the will, intellect without morality—the only form in which will can act without contradicting itself—is a snare. Intellect, of itself, is cold, solitary, individual, self-contemplative; it must come out of its isolation, combine with its like, become active, if it would become valid.

Had Shakespeare been suffered to follow his own bent, he would have gone entirely out of the line of tendency. Spenser, great poet as he was, did not express the spirit of the time. He was an offshoot of the Italian Classic Revival, and his debt to Tasso and Ariosto is almost immeasurable. He has never been dear to the

common heart, for in him the interest of real life is entirely lacking.

Shakespeare was born to be the poetic revelation of the English people. In that direction all things favored him; in any other direction everything was against him. He could not understand this then, probably never did. He felt the obstacles that fate seemed to throw in the way of his "better angel," the "man, right fair"; and struggled manfully to free himself from the "woman, colored ill"—the real, the world and its distractions, his profession, to which he was devoted despite his abuse of it. For the theoretical and practical were equally potent in Shakespeare, and he must needs have loved them both.

At first, he only complains of absence from his ideal—want of leisure for writing poems. His soul's "imaginary sight" presents its shadow to his "sightless view," but the heavy journey of the day's toil renders him unfit for communion with it:

"But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's strength seem stronger."

Life does not fulfil its promise. He is growing famous in a profession that he does not honor, and his success is attracting the envy and malice of others. He meets with disappointment and disillusion on every hand. The time he wishes to spend in giving form to his ideal is wasted, as he thinks, in the battle for existence; but his love clings to his art, and when he thinks of it "all losses are restored and sorrows end."

Now he reproaches it that it merely gave him a taste of fame; for he confesses that he suffers from the "uncertain, sickly appetite to please," only to cheat him with a barren hope:

"Why didst thou promise such a glorious day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?"

Now weighed down with contempt for his paltry life, he calls upon his "angel" to leave him: "Let me confess that we two must be twain"; now glorying so infinitely in its "worth and truth":

"That I in thy abundance am sufficed,
And by a part of all thy glory live."

Now reproaching, now forgiving the ideal for its "sensual sin"—its union with the real in his work; for to Shakespeare it seemed a degradation of his art to use it in producing plays:

"But yet be blamed if thou thyself deceivest
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest."

The sonnets of the second series addressed to the "woman, colored ill" undoubtedly belong to this period and are the most intense and passionate of the whole collection. He feels himself being drawn into the maelstrom of active life at the same time that he is being drawn away from his inner world of beauty, and he agonizes at the thought—the more so that, though overwhelmed with remorse, he is powerless against the charms of the real. The one hundredth and forty-fourth sonnet—usually called the "key sonnet"—expresses more clearly than any other the true nature of his interior conflict:

"Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still;
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman, colored ill,
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride,
And whether that my angel be turned fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;
But being both from me both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell;
Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
Till my bad angel fire my good one out."

The theme changes. His love for his art and his sorrow at separation fill his verse: "I must attend time's leisure with my moan." Now he is uncertain whether it is the form or content of poetry, "The clear eye's moiety or the dear heart's part," that he loves better. Now he is fearful that "truth may prove thievish for a prize so dear." Now he pictures himself as journeying from his good: "The beast that bears me, tired with my woe, plods dully on." Now, as having leisure to return.

"Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind."

A softer mood succeeds. His old confidence revives and hope seems rekindled. The fifty-fifth sonnet resembles the eighteenth in tone and has even a stronger ring, and the fifty-sixth, "Sweet love, renew thy force," has all the effect of a new invocation. But a fresh sorrow confronts him. Hitherto it has been the poet who has been absent—who has found no leisure to devote to poetry; now it is the Muse who is away and will not come at call. Further on, the poet accuses himself of "idle-hours." Heretofore he has blamed occasion, circumstances were against him; now he begins to feel in himself an impediment. He acknowledges his self-love and self-seeking, but excuses himself on the ground of his lofty aim:

"'Tis thee (myself), that for myself I praise."

He is fearful that he shall lose his love for the ideal—"That Time will come and take my love away." He describes himself as old, as one whose "youthful morn has travelled on to age's steepy night," and we know this can be only a figure which describes the state of his mind and hopes, not the physical age of a man barely forty-five when these poems were published.

The sixty-sixth sonnet is an outcry against the "times"—always the butt of the self-discordant. All honesty is dead, and he would desire death, too, only that he should leave his love alone. The world is dead to the ideal, he thinks, and even he debases it:

"For I am shamed at that which I bring forth,
And so should you to love things nothing worth."

This is the grief that confronts him oftenest; he may not write poems to secure his own immortality, but he must write dramas destined for the multitude. Nor is it strange that he should feel thus, for does not Emerson say of him: "It must even go into the world's history that our best poet lived an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement!"

Now he is undecided whether his enjoyment is complete in the mere possession of his inner world of beauty—whether the spiritual life is, in itself, sufficient, or whether it is worthless unless it can be seen—unless its presence in a form shall give him fame:

"Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then bettered that the world may see my treasure."

And now he is angry that "every alien pen hath got my use."

This prepares us for the final catastrophe. He is not able himself to produce a poem that shall honor his thought, but another does so. The second part of Spenser's "*Faerie Queen*" appeared in 1596, and, though we do not wish to push an analogy too far, we must believe that none but he can be the "better spirit" that moved our poet to jealousy if not to envy. He is the only poet of the time of whom it is likely Shakespeare would write:

"My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear,
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride."

And we have already seen that he had no ambition as a dramatist, even if the period—Marlowe being dead—had afforded any whose competition could have troubled him.

He rouses himself in one sonnet—

"Or I shall live your epitaph to make
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten,"

only to lapse, in the next, into the same jealous mood which culminates in:

"You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse."

The two following sonnets (LXXXV and LXXXVI) acknowledge his inferiority to the "better spirit," and the third is saddest of all. It begins: "Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing," and ends:

"Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but, waking, no such matter."

He dwells upon his own unworthiness, and is ready to pardon the Muse because of it: "For thee against myself I'll vow debate." He is gradually more and more overcome with the belief that the ideal has deserted him, and ceases to write—even sonnets.

The second division is as sharply defined as the first, and its expression necessarily much more involved. It represents the purely negative side of life, needful to development but something to be worked out of as soon as possible. To remain in such a

condition is the saddest of all possible fates, though life exhibits to us many who are so unfortunate. But Shakespeare was too strong and sweet a soul to place himself long in opposition to that Higher Principle which alone has in itself entire validity. We have already seen how rational and just he grew to consider the world order, how his latest and greatest plays all discover such an insight into the reasonableness of the ethical laws that bind the social whole as could never have emanated from one who regarded them as alien constraints.

To take the affirmative position, to acknowledge our limitations, is to place ourselves within the stream of wisdom, power, and love, and be carried by it into peace and perfect living—freedom. In the second part, we have followed Shakespeare through every grade of unhappy thought. We have seen him struggle to make his own laws, to create his own conditions, to accomplish his own aims, to compass something other than the plain duty that his talents and the popular feeling pointed out for him. At one moment he has blasphemed fate, at another he has writhed under the conviction of its power. Now he has grovelled beneath it, now he has become heroic and defied it. But the heroism that can make its appearance here is by no means a heroism that can establish its own regulations, that can create or transform its own environment. It is a heroism of submission. If a man desires that his deed shall have actuality, that it shall become a power in the world, he must bring it into harmony with the universal and necessary.

Whenever the concluding sonnets of the second division were written, it is evident that from that time their author submitted to the inevitable. With the ninety-seventh sonnet we seem to enter a new atmosphere. The turbid, restless, uneasy style is exchanged for one clear and sunny. This is now, indeed, "our Shakespeare," calm, serene, cheerful, "wise with all wisdom of the intellect and heart" and will, for he has also found his moral side. Again he has been absent, but during this absence he has rid himself of the desire for fame. He is now content only to be "obsequious in thy heart," in a "mutual render, only me for thee." He has suffered:

"What potions have I drunk of Syren tears,
 Distilled from limbees foul as hell within,
 Applying fears to hopes and hopes to fears
 Still losing where I saw myself to win ;"

but he has learned the true mission of suffering—growth. It has taught him patience, too—patience with himself as well as with others :

"I am that I am, and they that level
 At my abuses reckon up their own."

The ninety-second sonnet contains the germ of the happy certainty to which he has now attained: "But do thy best to steal thyself away, for term of life thou art assured mine." He saw the truth even then, as in a flash; the ideal—the good, the beautiful, and the true—does not depend upon its expression in a form. A man may carry it with him and live by it unsuspected; "I see a better state to me belongs than that which on thy humor doth depend." He can faithfully fulfill all the duties of life and so be enabled, without disturbance from without, to retire into the depths of his own soul, there to hold communion with all that in the outer world is denied him. By this means he will convert the ideal into the true real; or, rather, he will see that they are interchangeable terms and really have no separate existence.

"Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
 Fooled by these rebel powers that thee array,
 Why dost thou pine within, and suffer death,
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
 Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
 Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
 Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss
 And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
 Within be fed, without be rich no more;
 So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
 And, Death once dead, there's no more dying then."